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Legislative Notice

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UPDATE... UPDATE... UPDATE... UPDATE... UPDATE... UPDATE... UPDATE

S. 2159 — Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA, and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill 1999

Possible amendments:

Daschle et al. The Democrats have a package of amendments that include the following:

- (1) **Lift the cap on the marketing loans and extend their terms by six months.** It would eliminate the caps on marketing loans, leaving the rate at 85 percent of the olympic average price for the previous five years, on an emergency basis. It would also extend the marketing loan term from 9 months to 15 months under the same conditions.
- (2) **Require mandatory price reporting.** It would require the Secretary of Agriculture to authorize implementation of a pilot project to determine the impact of price reporting on domestic cattle prices. They indicate that mandatory price reporting by large meat packers (those that control over 5 percent of the market) would reveal price information that is not currently being reported.
- (3) **Provide targeted emergency assistance.** It would replenish the "disaster reserve" with \$500 million for USDA to create a program that would make indemnity payments to farmers beset by disaster. Also, it would allow the Secretary of Agriculture to declare a disaster and activate the reserve (currently only the President or Congress may do this), and would clarify that USDA could hold funds, not only commodities in reserve.
- (4) **Require labeling of imported beef and lamb.** It would require beef and lamb products imported into the U.S. to be labeled as imported beef or imported lamb and it

would permit imported beef and lamb to bear a label identifying the country-of-origin. U.S. beef and lamb would bear labels of designation and beef and lamb products blended with meat from the U.S. and another country would bear blended labels.

(5) Expand trade opportunities. The amendment would support sanction exemptions from agriculture commodities and IMF replenishment.

Brownback. Ag census. Streamlines the agriculture census reporting requirements and reduces the penalties for not completing the census.

Hatch. State inspected meat. Allows meat inspected by state health officials to be sold across state lines.

Johnson. Meat labeling. Requires beef and lamb meat products to be labeled as imported and allows for voluntary labeling of those meat products for country of origin. The amendment is a modified version of S. 617, the Meat Labeling Act introduced in April, 1997.

Graham. Vegetable labeling.

Lugar. Sanctions. Establishes a set of procedure and information requirements for consideration by the Congress and the Executive Branch of all new unilateral economic sanctions, both before and after implementation. The bill is prospective. It contains strong language against the inclusion of food, medicine and medical equipment in any new unilateral economic sanction. The amendment is a modified version of S. 1413, the Enhancement of Trade, Security, and Human Rights through Sanctions Reform Act.

Harkin, Durbin, Torricelli, and Leahy. Food Safety Initiative. Restores full funding to the President's food safety initiative. The President had requested a total of \$101 million for these activities; \$96 million of which is requested in the Agriculture Appropriations bill. The Senate bill provides \$2.6 million for this initiative.

Harkin. Increase funding for WIC.

Coverdell. Provides \$2.55 million by transfer to the Secretary to address urgent health threats posed by E. coli.

Coverdell. Agricultural credit improvement.

Daschle. Authorizes a pilot program to permit haying and grazing on conservation reserve land.

Durbin. Denies federal crop insurance to tobacco farmers.

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